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## **Accepting Educational Responsibility: Building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in a UK/global context.**

**A contribution to a symposium presentation on 'Accepting Educational Responsibility: Building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in Global Contexts' at the April 2021 Conference of the American Educational Research Association on 'Accepting Responsibility' with Jacqueline DeLong, Shivani Mishra, Parbati Dhungana, Michelle Vaughn and myself (Jack Whitehead)/  
Jack Whitehead, University of Cumbria, UK.**

### **Abstract**

This paper explores the implications, for improving educational practices and contributing to educational knowledge, of accepting educational responsibility in building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in my local and global contexts. The paper explores the educational influences in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence practice and understandings as I realise, as fully as I can, my value of educational responsibility. I am researching my acceptance of educational responsibility as I participate in a global social movement of Living Educational Theory researchers. These researchers are engaged in asking, researching and answering the question, 'How do I, individually and in cooperation with others, enhance the difference Living Educational Theory research can make in a community concerned with extending human flourishing?'. The paper analyses the unique constellations of values that are used by Living Educational Theory researchers to explain their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their practices and understandings. Evidence will be presented to show how the explanations of individual researchers are contributing to the global knowledgebase of educational practitioners.

### **Introduction**

I became aware of my educational responsibility in the first lesson I taught as a teacher of science in September 1967. In this lesson I experienced a tension because I could see that I was not communicating with my pupils in terms of supporting their learning in a scientific enquiry. I accepted that this was part of my educational responsibility as a professional educator. The tension was grounded in my valuing of the educational importance of scientific enquiry and my experience of not communicating with my pupils. I came out of this lesson asking myself, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'. Over 53 years later I continue to ask, research and answer the question, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'. The question appears to be the same. However the meanings of 'I', 'improve' and 'what I am doing', have transformed in the course of my enquiry. When I began, my educational responsibility was focused on helping my pupils to develop their understandings of scientific enquiry. In 2021 I am focusing on researching the processes of improving my practice as I accept an educational responsibility for building Living Educational Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in UK and global contexts.

Two of these contexts are my research archive on a Living Educational Theory research approach to research and live and the Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS) that I helped to form in 2008.

You can access my research archive at <https://www.actionresearch.net/> , with its introduction: A Living Educational Theory (Living Theory) Approach to Research and Life :

A Living Educational Theory (Living Theory) approach focuses attention on the experiences and implications of living values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. These values are the life-affirming and life-enhancing values that give meaning and purpose to the researcher's life. They are clarified as they emerge in the course of researching questions such as, 'How am I improving what I am doing?' They form the explanatory principles and standards by which improvements in both practice and knowledge-creation are judged.

The approach stresses the importance of extending the influence of these ontological and relational values and understandings in explanations of educational influence. In a Living Educational Theory approach to research and a human existence, individuals hold their lives to account by producing accounts of their living-educational theories; that is 'explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations, in enquiries of the kind, 'How am I improving what I am doing?'" ([Whitehead, 1989](#)).

A Living Theory researcher can use methods and draw insights from a range of other methodologies and theories, such as Action Research, Narrative Enquiry, Self-Study, Participatory Research, Autoethnography, Ethnography, Grounded Theory, Critical Theory and Case Study, as well as various quantitative methods. Researchers new to Living Theory research might visit an [introduction](#) and read the [Advanced Bluffer's Guide](#).

For tutors and action researchers on masters degree programmes interested in classroom research and action reflection see [Action planning in improving practice and in generating educational knowledge](#) See also the [Master's Writings](#).

For Living Theory continuing professional development Programmes (CPD) see [Living Values, Improving Practice Co-operatively](#).

For supervisors and Living Theory researchers on doctoral programmes interested in research methodologies see [Doctoral Writings](#)

For those wanting to develop their support for doctoral and masters researchers and looking for further references [try here](#)

You can access the commitment and scope of EJOLTS, together with the archive of issues from 2008-2020 at <https://ejolts.net/>

## Commitment and scope

**The Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS)** is committed to publishing [living-educational-theory](#) (often shortened to living-theory) accounts of practitioner-researchers from a wide range of global, social, cultural and professional contexts. We welcome submissions from all engaged in Living Educational Theory research (often shortened to Living Theory) researchers who wish to contribute rigorous and valid accounts of their [living-educational-theories](#) to improving educational knowledge. EJOLTS offers distinctive, stimulating opportunities for creativity, learning and spreading knowledge of educational influences in learning; learning which carries hope for the flourishing of our individual and collective humanity.

The journal focuses on the [living-educational-theories](#) of practitioner-researchers. Researchers generate their living-educational-theories as their values-based 'explanations for their educational influences in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations' ([Whitehead, 1989](#)) in the process of researching questions such as, 'How do I improve what I am doing'. The values at the heart of [Living Educational Theory research](#) (often shortened to Living Theory research) are the life-enhancing values that are relational and ontological, in the sense that they give meaning and purpose to the lives of individuals and groups. They are values that carry hope for the future of humanity, such as love, freedom, justice, compassion, courage, care and democracy.

When I focus on contributing to the generation of 'Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry' I am using 'culture' in the way defined by Said (1993) and culture of inquiry in the way defined by DeLong (2002, 2015). Said uses the word, 'culture' to mean two things in particular. First, he means all those practices, that have relative autonomy from the economic, social, and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principal aims is pleasure. He includes in these practices the arts of description, communication, and representation, the popular stock of lore about distant parts of the world and specialized knowledge available in such learned disciplines as ethnography, historiography, philology, sociology, and literary history. Second, he means a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought. Drawing on Matthew Arnold Said agrees that culture comes to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state; this differentiates 'us' from 'them', almost always with some degree of xenophobia. Culture in this sense is a source of identity, and a rather combative one at that, as we see in recent 'returns' to culture and tradition. (Said, pp. xii-xiv, 1993). I am using 'culture' in the sense of 'a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought.'

In using 'culture of inquiry', in the way defined by DeLong (2015), I include the experiencing of being loved into learning in a living-culture-of-inquiry for creating a living-theory of one's own life. I am claiming that a culture of inquiry, that is grounded in 'being loved into learning', is 'a refining and elevating element, of the best that has been known and thought within any culture. DeLong shares the growth in her learning as she contributes to the creation of a safe

environment in which members of the group can participate in a values-based dialogue for creating living-theories. Delong sees dialogue as crucial to generating and sustaining a culture of inquiry. Delong encourages dialogue on creating an evolving living-culture-of-inquiry in terms of how to support others to create their own living-theories. I accept Delong's understanding of 'evolving' in that her understanding of this process of supporting others in a safe, supportive and encouraging space continues to refine through interaction with other practitioner-researchers in locations across the globe, as we have been doing in the preparation of our presentations for this symposium. This includes

...the use of multi-media and multi-screen SKYPE conversations are enabling us to 'pool' our life-affirming and life-enhancing energies, as well as sharing and evolving our relationally dynamic culture-of-inquiry in creating our living-theories. (p.1)

My paper in this symposium follows the structure, suggested by AERA for proposals for consideration for acceptance on the programme: Purpose and Aim; Perspective; Methods; Data Sources; Results; Significance.

### **1. Purpose and Aim**

The purpose is to share an original contribution to educational knowledge made by a self-study practitioner-researcher who identifies himself as a global citizen and activist scholar in the generation of a living-educational-theories.

This contribution to a global movement of Living Educational Theory researchers includes my commitment to project my into the creation of a future that has not been realised yet, but which is informed by the value of living-global-citizenship (Whitehead, 2018). This value has been clarified and communicated elsewhere (Coombs & Potts, 2012; Potts, 2012; Potts, Coombs & Whitehead, 2013; Coombs, Potts & Whitehead, 2014). Mark Potts (2012) introduced me to the ideas of living-citizenship and living-global citizenship in his thesis on "How can I Reconceptualise International Educational Partnerships as a Form of 'Living Citizenship'?" (Potts, 2012). The idea of using living-citizenship as an explanatory principle in Living Educational Theory research was reinforced by the paper on 'Bringing Living Citizenship As A Living Standard Of Judgment Into The Academy' (Coombs & Potts 2012). This paper explored 'Living Citizenship' as a means for developing international continuing professional development (i-CPD). It adapted my living educational theory approach to action research (Whitehead's 2005) by critically active citizens.

In this symposium we are linking the values of human flourishing that include social justice and knowledge exchange to our contributions to each others', i-CPD professional learning environments in what we are seeing as our international educational partnership.

Potts et al. (2013) clarified these meanings further in a paper on 'Developing Cultural Empathy And The Living Global Citizenship Agenda: The Social Role And Impact Of Technology In Supporting Global Partnerships'. Coombs et al. (2014) deepened their understandings of living global citizenship in their book on 'International Educational Development and Learning through Sustainable Partnerships: Living Global Citizenship'. At the heart of our educational practices are our values of living global citizenship with educational responsibility. Hence I need to clarify meanings of educational responsibility.

In terms of accepting an educational responsibility as educators, educational researcher and global citizens I agree with Biesta's (2006) point about the responsibility of the educator:

...we come into the world as unique individuals through the ways in which we respond responsibly to what and who is other. I argue that the responsibility of the educator not only lies in the cultivation of "worldly spaces" in which the encounter with otherness and difference is a real possibility, but that it extends to asking "difficult questions": questions that summon us to respond responsively and responsibly to otherness and difference in our own, unique ways. (p. ix)

The aim of this paper in the symposium is to demonstrate how to generate multidimensional and relationally dynamic forms of knowledge and communication, which contribute to the evolution and influence of a global educational knowledgebase. The weave created through our educational conversations as we use our Living Theory research approaches that are located in different disciplines, cultures, places and times, generates and communicates our contributions to educational knowledge. This knowledge contributes to a living culture of educational inquiry and to our evidence-based political actions in living our values of human flourishing as fully as possible.

Presenters in this symposium have used the digital technology of Zoom to gather digital visual data on our educational conversations as we prepare our presentations for this symposium. We are not expecting readers to view all of our conversations, but we are pointing to episodes in our dialogues in which we are clarifying and communication our values of human flourishing and our educational influences in each others' learning. You can access a 39:41 minute video of our conversation on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i61e7nreB34> between:



Parbati Dhungana Shivani Mishra Jack Whitehead Michelle Vaughn Jacqueline Delong  
Nepal India UK USA Canada

Shivani is supporting Swaroop Rawal in a life-skills education programme at Sardar Patel University in India. You can access Swaroop's living-poster at <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/swaroop20.pdf> Swaroop describes life skills education as:

Life skills education is a decisive approach to break the cycle of poverty, abuse, and oppression of the vulnerable and the marginalised. It is a form of education which has the power to transform societies.

In her living-poster Swaroop also explains why she does what she does:

Why do I do what I do...Because I believe that a high-quality education is one of the most effective ways to reduce inequalities in society. I see my work as a support to all children, as a way to make their world a better place in which to live, to help the

children to overcome adversity and become resilient, to learn how to face the problems they have to deal with in their young world, to empower them so they can grow into well adjusted adults. These are lofty goals but they are at the heart of what I am trying to achieve.

You can access Swaroop's doctorate on 'The Role Of Drama In Enhancing Life Skills In Children With Specific Learning Difficulties In A Mumbai School: My Reflective Account' (Rawal, 2006) from <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/rawal.shtml>.

Shivani is Swaroop's Head of Department at Sardar Patel University. In her contributions to this Symposium Shivani explains:

The main perspective is that early childhood is a critical stage of development as it directly influences the social, economic and health of people and society. In early years there is a rapid development of the brain, which duly impacts on health, behaviour, and learning of children. Preschool education in Rural India is imparted through the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). In this paper, I exemplify my classroom practice and generate a living educational theory as I explore the implications of asking, researching and answering the questions, "How do I improve my practice? How do I improve what I am doing? How I do enhance the process of education with the help of modules of life skill education?"

As participants prepare for our Symposium we draw insights from Life Skills Education, as citizen scholars who are seeking to contribute to:

...a decisive approach to break the cycle of poverty, abuse, and oppression of the vulnerable and the marginalised. It is a form of education which has the power to transform societies.

## **2. Perspective**

The primary perspective is that a Living Theory research approach, can contribute to the generation of a publicly validated, professional knowledgebase of professional educators in their living-educational-theories, as contributions to the evolution of a global educational knowledge-base. Much evidence for the academic legitimacy of this perspective can be found in the Living Educational Theory doctorates that have been legitimated by different Universities around the world and that can be accessed from:

<https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>

The theoretical tools include insights from understandings of ecology of knowledges and knowledge democracy in creating alternatives to neoliberalism with co-operative economies. We identify with the values in Arianna Briganti's (2020) PhD thesis on her 'living-educational-theory of International development' as Arianna contributes to the evolution of a global educational knowledge base that includes an alternative to neoliberalism:

My thesis is focused on the relationally dynamic values of empathy, social and gender justice, outrage, responsibility, love for and faith in humanity and dignity. The originality lies in their use as explanatory principles in my explanation of my educational influence in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that affect my practice as a development professional... A generative form of development emerges that includes a gendered epistemology. I discuss how my own pursuit of gender justice has improved the quality of my work as a female development economist and practitioner, living in a capitalistic era. (Abstract)

### **3. Methods**

The methods used in this Living Theory research for enhancing the robustness of the validity and rigor of the explanations, include the use of Habermas' (1976) four criteria of social validity and Winter's (1989) six criteria for enhancing rigor. The four criteria from Habermas relate to comprehensibility, evidence, sociohistorical and sociocultural understandings and the authenticity of the explanations in terms of the ontological values the researcher claims to hold. The six criteria from Winter relate to dialectical and reflective criteria, risk, multiple resource, plural structure and theory practice transformation. They include a method of empathetic resonance (Huxtable, 2009) with digital visual data for clarifying and analyzing visual narratives, to develop a shared understanding of relationally dynamic values in valid accounts of explanations of educational influences in learning. Other methods of inquiry draw insights from: the methodologies of auto-ethnography in recognising cultural influences in explanations; critical social constructivism in recognising social historical, political and economic influences in explanations; action research in using action-reflection cycles in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'; narrative inquiry in telling a story that includes an explanation of educational influences in learning; self-study in using the ontological values that give meaning and purpose to one's existence, as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.

### **4. Data sources**

The data sources include over 40 Living Educational Theory doctoral theses that examine the educational influences in learning of Living Educational Theory researchers who have accepted their educational responsibility for building living theory cultures of educational inquiry in global contexts as citizen scholars. The doctoral theses are on open access from:

<https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>

The data sources also include the publications and conference presentations that can be accessed from:

<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/writing.shtml>

### **5. Results**

The results are framed in terms of the claims made in the successful session Abstract for this symposium on 'Accepting Educational Responsibility: Building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in Global Contexts':

The contributors are all exploring the implications for improving their educational practices and contributing to educational knowledge of accepting educational responsibility in building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in their local and global contexts. They are participating in a global social movement of educational researchers this is engaged in asking, researching and answering, 'How do I, individually and in cooperation with others, enhance the difference Living Educational Theory research can make in a community concerned with extending human flourishing?' Each researcher is moved by unique constellations of values that are used to explain their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their practices and understandings.

The results can be seen in the contributions to this Symposium as the participants have demonstrated how they ask, research and answer, 'How do I, individually and in cooperation with others, enhance the difference Living Educational Theory research can make in a community concerned with extending human flourishing?'

These results are a contribution to the generation of a new epistemology for educational knowledge that fulfils the still relevant call by Schon's (1995) for a new epistemology and is consistent with Snow's (2001) call to make public the practical knowledge of educators.

Schon's basic argument is that:

The new forms of scholarship call for a new institutional epistemology. If the scholarship of synthesis, application, or teaching requires that the scholar contribute to knowledge according to norms shared and developed within a community of inquiry, then the new scholarship cannot achieve legitimacy within an institution exclusively dedicated to technical rationality--the epistemology around which the modern research university was originally established and which still underlies its key institutions. (Schon, 1995, p.34)

The findings of this paper, within the symposium as a whole, are that the new norms, developed within our community of inquiry, include 'being loved into learning', 'educational responsibility' and 'living global citizenship'.

In providing details of how these values have become norms in our research we have provided what Snow (2001) asked for in terms of systematizing our contributions to educational knowledge with a focus on clarifying our constellation of values and their use as explanatory principles in our explanations of educational influences in learning:

The knowledge resources of excellent teachers constitute a rich resource, but one that is largely untapped because we have no procedures for systematizing it. Systematizing would require procedures for accumulating such knowledge and

making it public, for connecting it to bodies of knowledge established through other methods, and for vetting it for correctness and consistency. If we had agreed-upon procedures for transforming knowledge based on personal experiences of practice into 'public' knowledge, analogous to the way a researcher's private knowledge is made public through peer-review and publication, the advantages would be great. (Snow, 2001, p. 9).

The new epistemology is focused on using the unique, relationally dynamic values, of a Living Educational Theory researcher, as the explanatory principles in the generation and sharing of the individual's living-educational-theory. These relationally dynamic values include the generation and sustaining of Living Cultures of Educational Inquiry that include the values of 'being loved into learning', 'educational responsibility' and 'living global citizenship'.

## 6. Significance

The significance is in providing answers to questions asked by the organisers of the 2021 AERA annual conference.

- i) How can we individually and collectively demonstrate greater care about what happens in our society and in educational institutions?
- ii) What evidence and expertise can we bring?
- iii) How can we unite with practitioners, with scholars across other academic fields and disciplines, and with other citizens beyond academia to strategically address complex social and educational problems?

### i) **How can we individually and collectively demonstrate greater care about what happens in our society and in educational institutions?**

The response to question i) is in the individual presentations for the Symposium that have been influenced by the collective 'We' responses in our planning conversations. Part of the significance is in showing how an 'I' can move to a 'We' as we supported each other in the expressions of greater care about what is happening in our societies and in educational institutions both locally and globally. For example we are taking care to generate and share our educational knowledge within the educational institution of the American Educational Research Association. In taking care we are emphasizing that we are contributing to educational knowledge as distinct from the knowledge of the disciplines of education. Taking care over this distinction is important to counteract the influence of the Executive Director of AERA who has advised editors of AERA publications to use **education research** rather than **educational research**.

Our collective demonstration of greater care about what happens in our societies and educational institutions is focused on our research on enhancing the flow of our energy flowing values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. Whilst recognizing sociohistorical and sociocultural differences that influence our practices and understandings

in Nepal, India, Canada, the USA and the UK we are cooperating in supporting the generation and sharing of our unique constellations of values that we use in our explanations of educational influences in learning and that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

**ii) What evidence and expertise can we bring?**

The response to question ii) is in the evidence of our different and shared expertise that we have demonstrated in making public our living-educational-theories in this Symposium in our papers on 'Accepting Educational Responsibility'.

Shivani Mishra acknowledges the claim of the World Development Report (2018), that education is the best way to pull out from economic misery especially for the vulnerable and disadvantages. Mishra focused her educational inquiry in a rural village, on expressing and researching her expertise in contributing to life skills education in enhancing the quality of education of preschool children of Ravipura village of Gujarat:

The data sources include the Integrated Child Development Scheme- (ICDS) Welfare Service for children in India. This is the world's largest community based program and was launched on 2 October 1975. The research described in this contribution provides evidence on how preschool education in rural India is imparted through ICDS, which has emerged as the most extensive program for early childhood development in India. Whilst ICDS is lagging in imparting quality education to preschool children this presentation provides evidence on how this quality can be improved.

Parbati Dhungana shared the values in her satvic framework, in our symposium, that are used as explanatory principles in the expression of her educational responsibility:

The Bhagawat Gita, Chapter 14 verse 5 states that "material nature consists of three modes: satva (goodness), rajas (passion), and tamas (ignorance)". Similarly 14.6 states:

**तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।  
सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥ 6 ॥**

It means, satva, the mode of goodness, is purer than the others which is illuminating and full of well-being. Satva is the state of happiness and full of well-being. We humans have all three qualities but they are dominated by one of the attributes. When we are dominated by satva, we are considered as satvic people. Satvic people happily and selflessly take social responsibility being happy, blissful, or joyful. Rajas people have passion for action seem actively working intending to attain something for their own and their peoples' benefit whereas Rajas people love to remain in their comfort zone and seem selfish and lazy as they work only for their own benefit. Therefore, I believe that among three modes, attainment of goodness (opposite to ignorance) is the highest human attribute, form or state in which one takes social responsibility and works for common good.

Jacqueline Delong shared her values of a 'culture of inquiry' and 'being loved into learning':

Since the ALARA Conference in Vermont in June 2018, I have openly made myself available to mentor individuals wanting to create their own-living-educational theory. At that conference, between our meeting at a workshop that Jack Whitehead and I presented (reference) and June of 2019, Michelle Vaughan and I created a culture of inquiry in which she created her own-living-educational theory and had it published (Vaughan, 2019). Liz Campbell coined the phrase that describes my way of teaching as "being loved into learning" (Campbell, 2011). Others have expanded that language. Michelle's language to describe my way of being in creating the cultures of inquiry was, "you are like a fairy godmother, sprinkling a little loving kindness here, a little loving kindness there..." (Vaughan & Delong, 2019).

Michelle Vaughan shared her values of connection, care, vulnerability, being an activist scholar and global citizen, in creating sustainable living theory cultures of educational inquiry

The objectives include the uncovering and validation of my core values of connection and care with peers and students through the lens of living-educational-theory. They include the generation of my living-educational-theory as I embrace my identity as an activist scholar and global citizen within my educational practices and scholarship within USA Higher Education. The purpose of this paper is to build a bridge of understanding between the individual work on building my own living-educational-theory and then translating and transforming that work to make connections with others to create sustainable living theory cultures of educational inquiry.

I (Jack Whitehead) have shared my value of accepting educational responsibility in building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in my local and global contexts.

I am researching my acceptance of educational responsibility as I participate in a global social movement of Living Educational Theory researchers. These researchers are engaged in asking, researching and answering the question, 'How do I, individually and in cooperation with others, enhance the difference Living Educational Theory research can make in a community concerned with extending human flourishing?'. The paper analyses the unique constellations of values that are used by Living Educational Theory researchers to explain their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their practices and understandings. Evidence will be presented to show how the explanations of individual researchers are contributing to the global knowledgebase of educational practitioners.

- iii) **How can we unite with practitioners, with scholars across other academic fields and disciplines, and with other citizens beyond academia to strategically address complex social and educational problems?**

The response to question iii) includes the evidence in our presentations that show how our explanations of our educational influences as individual researchers are contributing to the global knowledgebase of educational practitioners. It draws data from our planning conversations for our symposium.



Planning for 2021aera Symposium on the 08-02-21  
[https://youtu.be/SG3k3qc\\_0hY](https://youtu.be/SG3k3qc_0hY)

If you can move the cursor backwards and forwards in the YouTube clip you may not need to download it onto your computer desktop, load it into quicktime and move the cursor backwards and forwards along the clip, pausing at the moments of greatest resonance, which for me is around 22:40 at the above image. Using this process of empathetic resonance (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2010), I believe that I can explain below how we are uniting as practitioners, as scholars and with citizens beyond academia to strategically address complex social and educational problems. At the heart of this explanation are the values that we are bringing into our symposium planning and presentations as explanatory principles as we generate, evolve and sustain our culture of inquiry.

These values have also been communicated in an interactive symposium at the Collaborative Action Research Network/Action Learning, Action Research Association Conference between the 17-19 October 2019 in Split, Croatia ( DeLong, et al., 2019).

### **What values are we bringing into our culture of inquiry?**

In answering this question I shall focus on my meanings of 'we' and 'culture' and the use of the tilde ~ to represent the flow of energy flowing values between ~we~I~ as explanatory principles in explaining my contribution to extending the influence of Living Educational Theory research in a culture of inquiry.

I am always hesitant in using 'we' within my writings and conversations. This hesitancy comes from a recognition of the danger that I am not justified in subsuming other 'Is' within my use of we, without being very careful in checking with others that they are agreeable to

my use of 'we'. Gumede and Mellett (2019) have analysed forming a 'We' through a good quality conversation in Living Educational Theory research. The 'we' question 'What values that we are bringing into our culture of inquiry?' has been agreed by all the contributors to this Symposium. I am using the above image from the video-clip to communicate my meaning of 'we'. At 22:40 on the video, I am experiencing a shared expression of life-affirming pleasure in which I am feeling included in our 'we' as we ask, research and answer our question 'What values that we are bringing into our culture of inquiry?'.

I think that it is worth repeated from what I have said above that my meaning of 'culture', in a culture of inquiry, is that used by Said (1993, p. xiv). I am using 'culture' in the sense of 'a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought.' In the video-clip around 22:40 the five participants in the conversation, on planning our 2021 AERA Symposium, are expressing their flows of life-affirming energy with their values of human flourishing. These energy flowing values transcend cultural boundaries set by their national contexts. They are what I am using to distinguish a global culture of inquiry that is expressing the best that has been known and thought. They unite 'us', in the 'we' of our question within a global culture of inquiry with our values of human flourishing. In writing 'our values of human flourishing' I want to be careful about a relationship between the 'One' and the 'Many' described by Socrates some 2,500 years ago as the art of the dialectician which holds together the 'One' and the 'Many'. I have shown above in section iii) the expression of the life-affirming energy that unites us in the 'One'. What I mean by the 'Many' is that each of us holds their unique constellations of values that we also bring into our 'culture of inquiry'.

In relation to the 'One' energy flowing value that unites us, I think that the following bears repeating as it is so important.

As I look at the image above I see the 5 of us expressing pleasure as an energy-flowing relational value. As I move the cursor backwards and forwards around the image at 22:40 minutes I see and feel this pleasure as a shared, relationally dynamic valuing that carries hope for human flourishing. My meanings of these words cannot be defined in terms of words alone. Their meanings require the digital visual data that shows our embodied expressions from within the relational dynamic of our being together, of our conversation, of the purpose of our meeting in planning for the symposium and in sharing our responses to each others' contributions.

In section ii) above on What evidence and expertise can we bring?, I have abstracted from the five presentations my understanding of some of the 'Many' values that constitute each others' unique constellation of values that are used to meaning and purpose to our individual lives and educational practices. We use the 'One' and the 'Many' as our explanatory principles in our contributions to the knowledgebase of education. The 'One' has been shown as an energy-flowing value between us that is expressed at 22:40 in the above video from a planning conversation for this Symposium. Within our 'Many' different values we share the value of accepting our educational responsibilities for enhancing learning with values of human flourishing within cultures of inquiry. In addition to this value, of accepting our educational responsibilities, our unique constellations of values include the following. Do please remember that whilst these appear to be separate and discrete, they

are distinct but held within the 'One' of the flow of life-affirming energy shown at 22:40 above.

Shivani Mishra is concerned to enhance economic well-being especially for the vulnerable and disadvantaged. Shivani Mishra is also contributing to life skills education in enhancing the quality of education of preschool children, especially in areas of economic distress within her Indian and global contexts.

Parbati Dhungana's shared her values that are grounded in her satvic framework with her focus on the attainment of goodness as the highest human attribute, form or state. Parbati Dhungana takes social responsibility and works for the common good within her Nepalese and global contexts.

Jacqueline DeLong shared her values of a 'culture of inquiry', 'being loved into learning', 'a dialogical way of being', 'transforming environments of impoverishment and inquiry' and 'loving educational conversations', in overcoming the demoralisation and devaluation of economic rationalism in hopeful and loving processes of social transformation.

Michelle Vaughan shared her values of connection, love, care, vulnerability, being an activist scholar and global citizen, in creating sustainable living theory cultures of educational inquiry with her USA and global contexts.

Jack Whitehead shared his values of educational knowledge-creation and sharing, with living-educational-theories in building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in his UK and global contexts.

As activist scholars we are exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions that are arising from accepting educational responsibility in building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in our particular (Nepalese, Indian, USA, Canadian and UK contexts) and our global contexts. At the heart of our Living Theory Culture of Inquiry we have shown ourselves, with digital visual data, to be expressing what unites us as 'One' in a flow of life-affirming energy that we identify as a value of human flourishing. We have also shared our 'Many' values from the unique constellations of values that we use to give our individual lives their meaning and purpose.

We are inviting members of AERA and other interested researchers to join us in our co-operative inquiry into the implications of accepting educational responsibility with values of human flourishing as Living Educational Theory researchers.

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